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Vienna

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SOURCE

Interreport-Ost

### THE LOW STANDARD OF LIVING IN BULGARIA

Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources.

## Shortages of Sugar, Milk, and Milk Products

At the beginning of June 1953, reports began to come through to the effect that in March, April, and May there had been a serious crisis in the supply of certain foodstuffs. These items became rarities in the state stores and were to be found almost exclusively on the black market; they included sugar, all products containing sugar, chocolate, milk, all products containing milk, and most of the so-called "colonial goods" (tea, coffee, etc.). The government's countermeasures in this temporary crisis consisted of a drastic curtailment of the periods when the dairies were open for sales and a reduction in the content of packages of colonial goods. For some time now, all dairies in Sofia have been permitted to remain open only between 1600 and 1700 hours. Setting the sales hours during the afternoon makes it difficult for most of the workers to make purchases, and thus brings about a natural reduction in the demand.

In the state consumers' stores, the single type of coffee available is sold in tiny packets of 50 grams each for 16 leva. Tea and chocolate have disappeared almost completely, except on the black market.

The recent shortages of foodstuffs are all the more unwelcome because the much publicized vegetable crop of 1952 supplied the city population with only 60 percent as much as in 1937, and the delivery of early vegetables in 1953 is falling even farther behind. Hothouse lettuce, vegetables, and fruit have become so rare that rationing of a sort was put into effect by means of price increases which frequently amounted to 50 percent above the planned and customary prices.

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Since the beginning of this year, radical price changes have become the rule in the state-owned "NARMAG" stores. The official justification is that prices must be regulated in accordance with the harvest; but prices have been changed even on articles, such as rice and sugar, which are dependent upon imports, not on variations in the harvest.

The prices of scarce fcodstuffs are as follows (in leva):

Salami, per kg	40
Goose, per kg live weight	18
Turkey, per kg live weight	30
Chicken, per kg live weight	Ž5
Rabbit, per kg	30-40
Nuts, per kg	12
Honey, per kg	40
Sugar, per kg	10

Producers' prices and retail prices of foodstuffs are shown in the following table (in leva):

	Price Paid by the State to Producers	Retail Price in "NARMAG" Stores
Whole milk, per liter	0.30	
Skim milk, per liter		3.20
Beef, per kg live weight	2.00	
Beef, per kg slaughter weight	·	16.00
Potatoes, per kg	0.40	1.15
Onions, per kg	0.30	0.85

The state does not discriminate against the individual farmer in the payments made for his products, for all farmers are extremely discriminated against to the same degree. Discrimination against the individual farmer is shown by denying him fertilizer and machinery, and particularly in setting the quantities of food he must deliver. For example, every individual farmer must surrender 150 kilograms of beef per year, live weight, whether or not he owns beef cattle. If he has no beef to surrender, he must buy it on the free market at eight times the price that he will receive for it from the state.(1)

The following shows the contrast between the wages of Bulgarian laborers and the salaries of officials, and reveals the standard of living for the laborer by comparing his daily wage to the prices of foodstuffs, alcoholic beverages, and textiles at state-owned stores and on the free market:

Daily wages for laborers Assistant laborer, 10 hours per day average Skilled worker, 10 hours per day average	13 leva 15-18 leva
Highly skilled foreman in metallurgical plant, highest daily wage schedule	23.80 leva
Monthly salaries of officials High party or government functionary High government official Average government official	1,052 leva 864 leva 544 leva

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Five days earlier the same source reported that "by way of comparison, the monthly salary of a laborer is 450-500 leva; that of a skilled worker, 600-700 leva; that of a specialist, 800-1,000 leva; and that of a party functionary or official, 1,000-1,200 leva."

Prices of foodstuffs at the beginning of June 1953 (in leva)

	Price in State- Owned "NARMAG" Stores	Price on Free Market
Black bread, per kg	1.96	
White "Dobrudzhanka" bread	3.80	
Black flour		4.00
White flour	6.80	4.00
Cornmeal		4.00
Paste products, per kg	9.00	
Grits, per kg	8.00	~
Rice, per kg	10.00	9.00
Skim milk, per liter	3.80	
Whole milk, per liter		4.00
Sheep's milk cheese, per kg	12.80	
Cheese with high fat content, pe	er kg 20.00	u-
Butter, per kg	25.00	30-40
Edible oil, per liter	15.00	·
Lard, per kg	20.00	
Beef, per kg	14-16	
Veal, per kg	18-20	• •
Pork, per kg	24.00	
Lamb, per kg	20.00	
Sausage, per kg	38.00	
Ham, per kg	34.00	
Egg, one	0.95	
Turkey, per kg live weight		30.00
Rabbit, per kg		30-40
Onions, per kg	0.85	

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	Price in State- Owned "NARMAG" Stores	Price on Free Market
Cabbage, per kg	0.85	• •
Potatoes, per kg	11.15	
Carrots, per kg	1.00	
White beans, per kg	12-13	
Peas, per kg	10.00	
Lentils, per kg	10.00	
Spinach, per kg	1.00	2.00
Canned vegetables, per kg	4-4.50	
Canned tomatoes, per kg	3.00	
Apples, per kg	4.20	3.00
Lemons and oranges, per kg	40.00	~~
Nuts, per kg	12.00	
Olives, per kg	25.60	•
Honey, per kg	40.00	
Sugar, per kg	9.60	
Lump sugar, per kg	10.00	
Marmalade	8-20	
Candy (caramels), per kg	14-24	
Cocoa (almost unavailable), per kg		200
Coffee (not obtainable), per kg		320-400
Tea (a rarity), per kg		360
Lime-blossom tea, per kg	20.00	
Alcoholic beverages		
White or red wine, per liter bottle	12.00	
Vermouth	32.00	
Slivovitz brandy	30-36	
Cognac, per liter bottle	37	

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and the second s	Price in State- Owned "NARMAG" Stores	Price on Free Market
Textiles		
Wool material for men's coats, per meter	200-340	<b>~=</b>
Wool material for ladies' coats, per meter	135-400	
Suiting (wool), per meter	150-390	
Wool material for ladies' dresses, per meter	135-400	
Satin, per meter	28-45	
Silk material	60-80	
Man's shirt	70-120	
Man's underdrawers	32-48	
Brassiere	20-25	
Man's or lady's sweater	50-125	
Necktie	26-40.	
Nylon stockings (available only on the black market)		200
Men's socks	15-18	
Men's leather shoes	180-250	
Ladies' leather shoes	240-280	
Children's leather shoes	80-100	
Cleated shoes	500-560	

According to the wage schedule cited above, the yearly wages of an unskilled laborer are between 5,000 and 5,200 leva. A comparison of this figure with the necessary expenses for a year shows the low standard of living of the Bulgarian laborer. His bare minimum expenses for housing and clothing would amount to 3,700 leva. This means that he has only 1,300-1,500 leva for food, cigarettes, toilet articles, and other small expenditures, making no allowance for taxes, membership dues, etc. According to substantiated information from people who have recently been in Bulgaria, a common laborer has only about 3 leva to spend per day.

The following are prices of miscellaneous items of daily necessity:

	Leva
Rent for one furnished room	80
Rent for one unfurnished room	28-40
Heating stove, ordinary type	400

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#### HEATT TOPE

Leva 500-600 Blanket, poor quality Iron bed 280-322 Bed table (cabinet type) Cabinet with two doors 240-120-200 1,130 Cabinet with three doors 1,930 Wooden chair Cigarettes, per pack of 20 1.93-2.40 Matches, per box Fuel wood, per cubic meter 40 320 Electric power for household use, per kilowatt .28 Electric power for industrial use, per kilowatt .48 Streetcar fare .20-.40 Trolley-bus fare .40 Women's slippers, pair 20 Tailoring for a man's suit 120-200 (2)

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## SOURCES

- 1. Interreport-Ost, No 259, 27 Jun 53
- 2. Ibid., No 260, 1 Jul 53

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